However, the data from the trade sources indicate that the imports are showing a rising trend.

(b) Rising trend in imports may be on account of competitive prices for imported rice available to the trade.

(c) The reported quantities of import so far are not large enough to have any impact on the Public Distribution System (PDS). However, offtake for the category of consumers above poverty line would be adversely affected if the landed cost is comparable to the prices payable by that category of consumers under PDS.

Uniform sugarcane price policy

168. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the State-advised prices which the sugar industry is being forced to pay is taking this industry constantly towards sickness;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to adopt a uniform all-India sugarcane price policy; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) the prices of sugarcane advised by the State Government *i.e.* the State Advised Prices have no statutory action behind them. The Central Government fixes the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane under the provisions of the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966. The higher state advised prices of sugarcane increase the cost of production of sugar which affects the profitability of the sugar mills.

(b) and (c) The Central Government fixes the uniform Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane linked to a basic recovery percentage (currently of 8.5%) subject to a specified premium for

every 0.1% point increase in the recovery above that level. The Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) for individual sugar factories is fixed with reference to these parameters.

Rotting of rice in godowns

169. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 35 lakh tons of rice is rotting in Government godowns for want of takers;

(b) if so, whether the State Governments have refused to accept rice from the Union Government since the rice, which is lying in Government godowns, is not fit for human consumption;

(c) if so, the total value of such rice rotting in Government godowns;

(d) whether any responsibility has been fixed for the purchase of such inferior quality rice;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) how Government propose to dispose of such huge stock?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

However, some of the State Governments have expressed reservation in accepting rice procured under relaxed specification due to unseasonal rains in Punjab during 1997-98 and 1998-99.

(c) to (f) Do not arise.